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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5918
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0358
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0055
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7036
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5121
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3693
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0889
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3773
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2854
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7612
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5312
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1986
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000616

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND DRL (BARKS-RUGGLES)
MCC FOR S GROFF, D NASSIRY, E BURKE AND F REID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: GOVERNMENT MAKES HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORTS
PUBLIC

REF: A. COLOMBO 604

[B](#). COLOMBO 511

[C](#). COLOMBO 413

[D](#). COLOMBO 414

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#). (C) The Foreign Ministry on April 24 issued a media statement highlighting the April 12 re-issuance of the President's directive to the security forces on respecting human rights and outlining the Government of Sri Lanka's (GSL) progress on human rights issues. Essentially, the order on detentions states that security forces are to follow due process, including:

- The arresting officers are to identify both themselves and the person arrested or detained.
- The arresting officers are to inform the arrestee of the reason for his detention.
- A certificate of fact documenting the arrest is to be furnished to the family or counsel of the detainee.
- The arrestee will have the right to contact his family or counsel.
- Arresting officers will record a statement by the arrestee at the time of detention.
- The Human Rights Commission is to have access to any facility on the territory of Sri Lanka where people are detained, and to any arrestee or detainee.
- The Human Rights Commission is to be informed of the detention within 48 hours.

[2](#). (C) The press release came just two working days after Ambassador's meeting with Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona in which Ambassador encouraged the GSL to make its efforts on human rights known to the international community and the Sri Lankan public (ref a). It will be very important now for the GSL to ensure these procedures are followed.

[3](#). (C) COMMENT: The Mission has repeatedly stressed that the USG is unable to highlight the GSL's positive steps if they aren't first made public. It appears the GSL took this

message to heart. Moreover, the knowledge that security forces may be held accountable for detentions that are their responsibility may help some families discover the whereabouts of family members who have "disappeared." Victims and their families will also know their rights and have a public document to cite.
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